

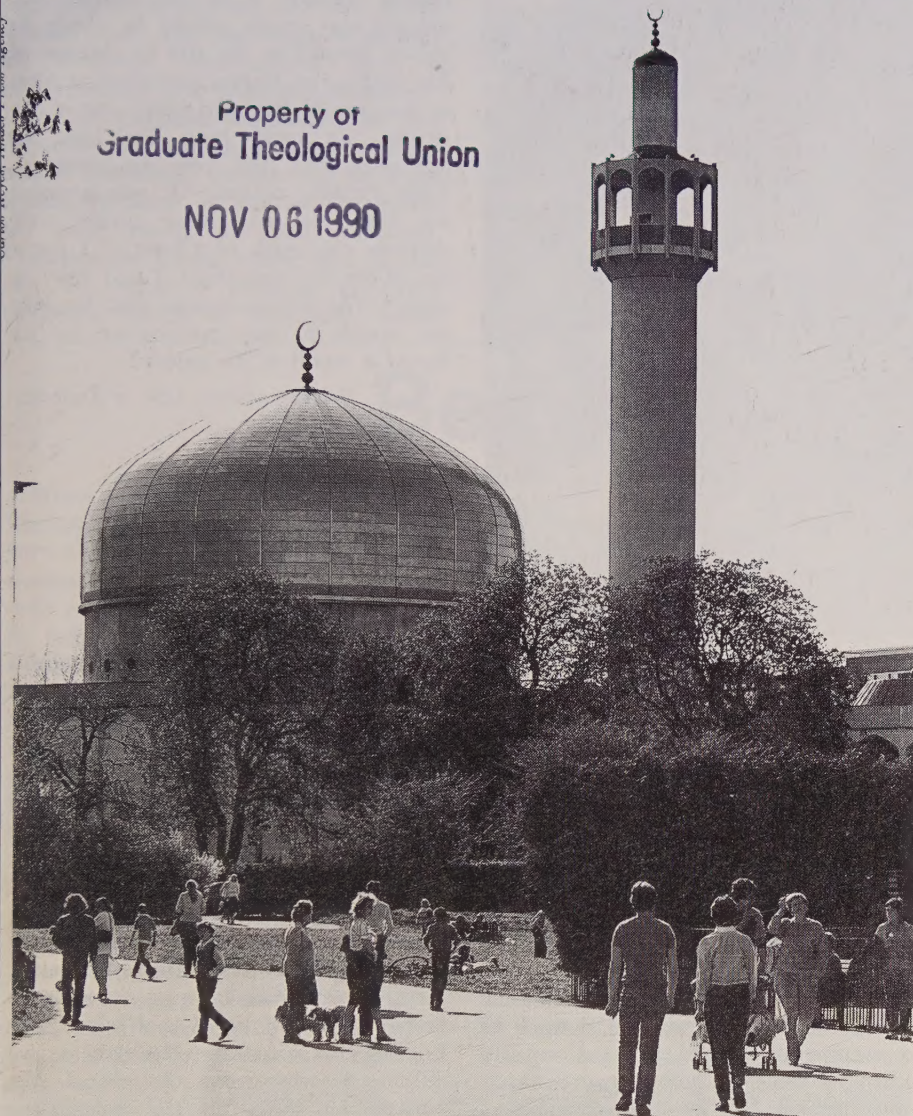
franciscan

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Regent's Park Mosque in London

Living dangerously

by Emmanuel Sullivan SA



In 1219 Francis of Assisi joined the Crusaders besieging Damietta in the Nile delta. In August of that year between four and six thousand Crusaders had been killed. The Sultan at Damietta had sent out his terms for peace with the Christians. While the terms protected

his self-interests, they were also very generous towards the Christians.

There is of course a lot of history behind the facts. Unfortunately this gesture of the Sultan was taken as a sign of weakness rather than enlightened self-interest, much less magnanimity. A week later, on 5

November, Damietta fell to the Crusaders after a year and a half of siege. Damietta had been a well fortified city of 80,000. After the siege and sack of the city only 3,000 citizens remained. Francis was shocked and shattered by



FRANCIS AND ISLAM

'Francis was shocked and shattered by the evils perpetrated by the Crusaders' writes Emmanuel Sullivan in the article starting on this page. Today it is often Islam that is portrayed as militant, unreasonable and fanatical, but to many devout Muslims this is a cruel distortion of their faith. Emmanuel Sullivan examines Francis' own attempts to reach across the boundaries, whilst Jim Thompson, Bishop of Stepney, looks at the problems, both theological and social, which face Christians and Muslims living together as neighbours.

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Francis and the Sultan

painting by Giotto

Francis said: "If you are hesitating whether to give up the law of Mahomet for the faith of Christ, command a great fire to be kindled and I will enter the fire with your priests and thus you may learn which faith is surer, and holier, and most worthy to be held". The Sultan replied: "I do not believe that any of my priests would be ready to expose himself to the fire in defence of his faith". For he had seen that as soon as mention of this was made, one of his priests, an aged man and one in authority, had fled from his presence. Then Francis replied: "If you promise me that you and your people will embrace the faith of Christ if I come out of the fire unscathed, I will enter it alone". The Sultan replied that he dare not accede to this proposition for he feared a revolt of his people'.

(Bonaventure's Life of Francis)

the evils perpetrated by the Crusaders.

Francis had set out like other missionaries of his day expecting, perhaps even desiring martyrdom. At any rate he practically asked for it. One has only to read accounts of the Franciscan proto-martyrs to see this method in their 'madness'. Yet, despite these presuppositions, Francis' behaviour does not easily fit this pattern. He went to the Sultan's camp and returned safe and sound under protective escort sent by the Sultan who asked Francis to pray for him.

The Sultan Melek-al-Kamil was a man of parts in a very difficult position. He was about the same age as Francis, an extremely cultivated man, a lover of poetry and the literature of the Sufi tradition in Islam. As a Saracen he was in many ways tolerant and refined. He was no fanatic. So, when Francis and Fra Illuminato entered his camp and announced their intention to save the Sultan's soul, Melek-al-Kamil seemed more amused than angry and decided to test both their sincerity and their sanity. Apparently they passed both tests with an A-level grade to judge by how the visit ended.

We may well ask what happened to Francis' burning desire for martyrdom. His biographers treat this event at Damietta rather cursorily. Suggesting that Francis all but made a Christian of the Sultan could be interpreted as a face-saving strategy for their revered Father. They do not seem to suggest

that Francis may have changed both his mind and his method.

After he returned to Italy he composed his Second Rule of 1221. Eric Doyle says of this Rule that it 'must be seen as marking a stage in the process of organic development'. Chapter sixteen of that Rule is entitled: Missionaries among the Saracens and other unbelievers. While the Rule recognises the possibility of martyrdom, it admonishes the friars to avoid quarrels and disputes in order to bear witness to Christ. They are charged to proclaim the word of God openly whenever this is judged to be God's will. It would seem that martyrdom takes second place to the witness of good example and the work of evangelisation.

The way of peace

John Holland Smith in his biography of Francis claims that the mission to Melek-al-Kamil was crucial to Francis' interior development. It certainly tested the vigour and courage of his faith. It must have been a powerful witness to the Christian Crusaders that the way of peace and reconciliation is the only true way for Christians to walk.

We have begun a 'Decade of Evangelism' among Anglicans and Roman Catholics in cooperation with other Christians to make Christ better known and his gospel of peace and

reconciliation more real for the world. Francis means much more than a symbol or 'patron' on which to advertise the Decade. He is its model and inspiration.

The way we evangelise is crucial. We hold fast to the centre of our faith — the revelation of the true God in Christ reconciling the world to himself. We are to live in such a way that Christian reconciliation and unity become ever more visible and credible. Moreover, Francis teaches us that we are martyrs in the radical sense of that word, that is to say as witnesses. Not only do we witness by dying for the gospel. We witness by living it. His crusade in 1219 was such a witness.

If we are sincere in claiming Francis both as patron and inspiration for our life and ministry we have to recall his witness in the camp at Damietta, a witness that Christians are called to be heralds of good news that in Jesus we have found the Way, the Truth, the Life for all God's children in all God's world.

Emmanuel Sullivan, of the Society of the Atonement, is a long standing friend of our Society. After coming from the States to England in the 60s, he represented the Roman Catholic Church in many ecumenical activities, both formal and informal. He was ecumenical officer for Bishop Alan Clarke of East Anglia and chaplain at Hengrave Hall. He is back in Westminster now, after ecumenical work in the States.

New Bishop Protector

by Brother Anselm SSF

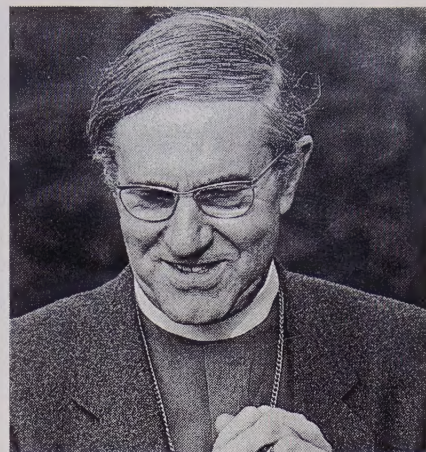
Shortly before he died, Francis wrote his testament — a very precious document which is read with the Rule. In it he makes reference to 'his lordship the Bishop of Ostia, who is the superior, protector, and corrector of the whole Order', and thus reminds us that all religious communities have a constitutional link with the church.

As an Anglican community we are required to have an episcopal visitor, and in Franciscan terminology he is the Bishop Protector. In the last *Franciscan* we paid tribute to John Eastaugh, Protector for fifteen years; and in this one we extend a welcome to Philip Goodrich, Bishop of Worcester, whom

the three orders of SSF in the European Province have elected to this office for an initial term of six years.

As an undergraduate Bishop Philip was a friend of the brothers in Cambridge (and again later as Chaplain of S. John's College). After parish ministry in Lincoln and Rochester dioceses he became Bishop of Tonbridge in 1973, and Bishop of Worcester in 1982. He at once sought out the brothers at Glasshampton and has made use of the house there ever since, and has welcomed them to his home at Hartlebury.

He is now faced with the task of getting to know not just Glasshampton



Peter Pollitt

and half a dozen brothers, but sisters and brothers in umpteen different places and guises, as well as sisters firmly at Freeland — to know us, love us, protect us, correct us — as we seek to serve God in the way of Francis.

Being an alien

by Brother Silas SSF

When people hear that I'm an English Franciscan living in Papua New Guinea, they usually assume I'm a missionary — presumably complete with pith helmet, noble soul and a zeal to bring the light of the Gospel, or Civilisation, or the Church of England, to those swathed in darkness. Several have seemed a bit put out when I've told them that Papua New Guinea is a good deal more Christian than England's ever been, that our PNG brothers are quite capable of doing all the necessary missionary work and that I spend most of my time in such un-missionary activities as cooking, growing vegetables and picking cocoa. After all, why cross the world and put up with all the problems of living in an alien culture, only to live as a rather junior brother in a very unexceptional

way? Why Haruro instead of Hilfield?

We have an unfortunate habit of thinking that our society has everything to give others and nothing to receive; because we are a 'developed' nation and others are 'underdeveloped', because we are 'advanced' and 'civilised'. We are truly advanced technologically and economically, but what of the rest? We have little sense of the spiritual; we seem unable, wealthy as we are, to organise such basics as adequate housing provision; many are isolated and uncared for, few are in stable and loving relationships. We may be among the most socially and emotionally needy people in the world. I certainly felt needy as I set off for Papua New Guinea.

So now I'm based at Haruro, near

Popondetta, in PNG's Oro Province. The house has about fifteen brothers, mostly young, keen novices. We pray, work, evangelise, teach in schools. In so many respects it's the life of a largish Franciscan house anywhere in the world. But within the house there are representatives of several quite distinct cultures, each with its own food customs, conversational style, body language and viewpoint. So our daily life together can be quite costly: usually uncomfortable and often quite painful. We each have to learn, without renouncing our cultural roots, to grow beyond them and be enriched by those of others.

We try to be open and patient when others' behaviour seems offensive and, sometimes, quite bizarre. We learn what it feels like to be an alien among unfamiliar people. And in doing so we find life together. Little by little we discover Christ in each other, find ourselves bound together in him. As we have grown together we have found fruits — of humility, forgiveness, penitence, freedom — beginning to grow . . .

I'd like to think that my experience was part of a trend. Just as, about twenty-five years ago, many discovered the spiritualities of India and Asia and were enriched by them, so perhaps we can be enriched by the experiences of the Tribal Peoples of the world. Perhaps we can learn from them how to live in a compassionate, responsive relationship with the created order. Perhaps we can learn new ways of belonging to each other, of building families and communities. For me, the value of a place like Haruro is the opportunity to find out.



A dance of welcome in PNG

Confrontation or dialogue?

by

Bishop Jim Thompson



Muslims outside the East London Mosque



Bishop Jim Thompson, who has been Bishop of Stepney since 1978, was until recently Moderator of the British Council of Churches Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths. He co-chairs the Inter-Faith Network for the UK. He has kindly consented to this abridgement of the Ashe lecture which he delivered this year.

A boy of eight set off for school one morning in Spitalfields in East London. It was a big day for him, an exciting day, because he was going to play the main part in the school play, and the school play was about S. Francis. He had a special costume and he was going to carry a cross and the whole story was going to be acted out the best they could.

It was a great success, and all the parents saw the small boy perform the part of S. Francis. His mother was there too for the great occasion. The little boy walked home with his mother. His father then took him on to the Mosque to learn about the Qu'ran. He was a young Bangladeshi boy of Muslim parents belonging to a Muslim family.

How is he going to be as he grows up to be a man, I ask myself? What will he make of the fact that he goes to a church school where Christianity is taught and where Christ is worshipped, and that he lives in a home which is a devout Muslim home? I think he is a symbol of our society.

He raises questions for me like these:

What is the relation of the Christian faith to the multi-faith society in which we live? Where does Christian theology lead us in mission? What does the Decade of Evangelism mean in some of our parishes where we have 95% Jews and in some others 80-90% Muslims?

What is the relationship between the Church, society and the communities of other faiths? What should Christianity be saying, living out, in our overall society?

I want to begin first with the faith,

with theology. The Christian faith is sometimes portrayed as a sort of seamless robe, as though it comes through pure Judaism of the Old Testament, through to pure Christianity of the New Testament. But in a very real sense this is a totally false view.

The diversity of influences on the Bible

The Old Testament includes a great deal of material culled from mythology, legends, people of other faiths, and was written over a period of 2000 years. Likewise Christ himself, on the basis of the Jewish tradition, is first explained and described in terms such as Messiah and Son of Man. But then by the time of S. John's Gospel the word Logos is used, a word which has resonances from the great religious movements in the Mediterranean world.

The Hebrew word Dabar — the Word, the Lord has Spoken, the Word acting with might and outstretched arm is seen by some as the same root as the Logos acting with power. Others say the word Logos really belongs to the Hellenistic culture and owes more to the Greek influence than to the Jewish.

At every stage the apostles and teachers were not afraid to draw on the wisdom of other faiths to explain the wonder of Christ. The Logos who became a man in Jesus Christ is both the power and the wisdom of God (a Jewish breakthrough) and the Hellenistic universal principle with which the whole world was thrilled, the principle of all created things, the 'communication' going through all.

So the Bible is not what we call syncretistic, it doesn't happily bring together idolatry and monotheism — we have only to think of the great Old Testament battles. Rather it witnesses to a journey from believing that Yahweh was one God among many to a belief that Yahweh was the only God and there was none other.

The Fathers of the Church, for instance, Origen and Augustine had no hesitation in taking the wisdom of the philosophers and using it to their own purpose to explain their own faith. They drew from the resources of the faiths of the people around them.

The one God of all the world

I think that the fact that, rather than a 'pure Jewish-Christian seam' we have many varied riches of the ages and races has important inferences for the way we regard other faiths. And with that fact is the great idea of monotheism the one God of all the world whose name the people of Israel knew, Yahweh.

The Bishop then goes on to the doctrine of creation leading to the conclusion 'our dialogue with peoples of other faiths should carry with it an understanding of the loving Creator'. Next he looks at S. Paul's vision of the Jewish and the Christian faith somehow finding a new unity. He then continues with an examination of the doctrine of the Atonement.

A lot of the arguments that happen in the Christian Church about other faiths are to do with the question of Atonement, redemption. It is a question of salvation, and what salvation means. We see from the Old Testament that salvation means being saved from the wickedness of the world — and that is a stream that flows through the Bible. But there is another stream too, and an equally important stream: the idea, the vision, that in some sense Christ was saving the world, that Christ had come precisely not just to save the chosen few, but to save the world which God had made and God had loved.

*He goes on to examine some texts from S. John's Gospel which can be interpreted in either an exclusive or an inclusive way. He affirms his faith in 'When I am lifted up I will draw all people to myself'. 'This is a text', he says, 'which helps me to love the people around me', 'a text that means most to me in a multi-faith society'. And he points to a great crucifix in a church he knows and to the words beneath it: *folliit peccata mundi, 'he bears, he carries away, the sins of the world'.**

We cannot say that we all believe in the same God. That is what is often said and it is just not true. God is one God, yes, but that is different from saying we all believe in the same God. God is one God: therefore if God has created all human beings the baby that is born to starve in Ethiopia is God's child and deeply loved by God, the same God loves that child as he loves me and loves you. But I can't say that the Christian view of God through Christ is the same as the Hindu view of God or the Muslim view of God, or the Sikh view of God.

Though we see Christ, and that is all we need to see, we do not see the whole creator God — we stand before a mystery like all other human beings in the world. 'He who has seen me has seen the Father' is a great and wonderful Gospel but Jesus does not demonstrate to us God in his divinity but in his humanity. What would Christ teach us about the way we respond to people of other faiths — the centurion, the thief on the cross, the good Samaritan, the Syro-Phoenician woman?

Somehow he recognises the godliness in these people before they had known him. And whether they were godly or



Muslims at prayer in the Brick Lane Mosque, London

not Jesus stood beside the oppressed and the outcast: most of the judgements of Christ come against the professional religious.

So our conviction is that Christ has demonstrated what God was like 'The Word was God, the Word became human' and that to me is the glorious part of Christianity and how Christianity should respond in faith to people of other faiths in our society. It is not to say in any way that we deny the uniqueness of Christ.

Cases of harassment

I have been very often to visit homes where there has been fire put through the letter box. I visited a home where a steel bar had been shoved through the front window of a flat by masked men as the mother was feeding her baby at the breast — she ran screaming to the back of the flat and there was another group of men who shoved another bar through her back window. The cases of harassment, the cases of injustice are so great, so I ask myself where should I be in this as a follower of Jesus?

I went to a home once where they had been suffering from extreme harassment. I am a busy man (a Bishop!) and I was just fitting in the visit between four or five other things. The lady came to the door and in her best English said 'How nice of you to come, would you come and sit down (on the one chair there was in the room) my husband is saying his prayers'. Fifteen minutes later he was still saying his prayers and eventually he came out of the bedroom where he had been praying as he does five times a day and I thought; 'In all my twenty-five years of ministry, I have never been kept waiting by anyone who was praying'. I have visited thousands and thousands of Christian people, and have never been asked to wait because someone was praying — I am still hopeful I will.

I have come to think that secular materialism presents a worse danger, a more risky ideology than other faiths because everyone can be infected with

it. And so I have come to try and understand what it means to see my Muslim brothers and sisters, my Sikh brothers and sisters as, in a way, allies. At a seminar recently a Muslim said, 'The most important thing is the sovereignty of God'.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of East London and I were going to visit some families who had just been evicted by the Tower Hamlets Council for being intentionally homeless — amazing expression 'intentionally homeless'. At some point we reeled off things that Victor (my colleague) and I could do for the families like approach the Housing Department, and the member of Parliament, open the church so they could come and shelter there. Number 5 was 'and of course we shall pray for you every day'. It was at this point that the fathers (mothers don't take many initiatives) all started applauding loudly and I realised that for them our prayers were the most important action we could take.

People say to our children in East London 'where do you come from?' I am trying to teach them to say 'I was born in the London Hospital'.

Strengthening of faith

Rather than seeing different faiths and cultures as a problem I have come to believe it is the Christian thing to allow communities the freedom and space to worship and be as they can be.

I have never felt one slight moment of doubt about Christianity in my dialogue with people of other faiths. What I have found is the great strengthening of my faith, because I have realised I am not some rather strange person who believes in God (like most of my contemporaries at university thought we Christians were) but actually most of the world believes in God, and where has not believing in God led us?

The full text of Bishop Jim Thompson's lecture can be found in Discernment Volume 4 Number 1, available from 35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL for £1.75 post free.

Back to school

by John N/SSF

There was a knock at the door which awoke me from my slumbers. I looked at my watch the time was 11.30 pm. It was someone to say that one of our boys who had run away was at the local police station, would I go and pick him up. So I got dressed and set off. We arrived at the police station at just after midnight and collected the boy who was curled up under a blanket in the waiting room. We returned the boy to his house just before 1 am. This is just one hour of one day during the year I have spent as a brother at S. Francis School.

For those who do not know S. Francis School; it is a residential School for some forty maladjusted boys in rural South-West Dorset founded by brother Owen in 1946. Boys are sent here by their local education authorities when they can no longer cope with them in mainstream education. A number of boys are from broken homes and most of them have emotional or behavioural problems. It is one of the aims of the school to provide a safe and caring environment for these children. Most of my time at the school has been spent giving support in whatever way I can to Brother Philip, the Guardian, to the boys and to the staff.

This has included working as a house parent and giving support in Bernard House, one of the junior houses. I enjoy this work (most of the time!); I find it challenging though at times it can be quite stressful particularly in the area of discipline. As a brother I am also involved in the life of the chapel including preaching and leading Assemblies, a prospect which I find a

My thanks to the editorial board of *Franciscan* for asking me to write something for this issue. 'Whatever you like', they said; 'anything that's a hot potato for you', 'news or views' . . . I'm not sure what the following is!

In May I was privileged to represent the Conference on the Religious Life in the Americas at the Permanent International Ecumenical Consultation of Religious — a rather big name for a fairly small conference, which met this year in Rome. For one day of the get-together we left the crazy traffic scene of Rome for a visit to Assisi — a bonus indeed for me! I had been to the Umbria area about 23 years ago, as a novice in CSF and must confess that I was not, at that time, 'heavy into Francis'. How would Assisi seem now?

We started at the Portiuncula and in that tiny, dark chapel, where many of you have prayed, I felt at one with Francis, praying out his joy and pain, happiness and disappointments. It is a graced place, encouraging meditation and reflection and I could have stayed for a long time. But — on to the Basilica; a reunion with Father Max Mizzi, his tour, his pain at his own ecumenical pilgrimage from the day he met two Anglican Franciscan brothers (SSF), 'with their knots on the other side', to welcoming those of many faiths who now come to Assisi as peacemakers and whom Max tries to lead to Jesus and the Gospel, through Francis. I still don't like the Basilica very much; does Francis? His tomb is almost an absurdity — patently he's very much alive in the world today.

The Carceri was much as I remembered it; I think the tree planted by the Duke of Edinburgh in the cause of world conservation is an addition and this is further

Minister's Letter



Sister Cecilia,
Minister General of
the First Order
sisters

evidence of the universal, cosmological appeal of Francis. This place of retreat in the hills is a reminder that so much of Francis' life was spent in prayer and withdrawal.

Down the hills to San Damiano and time to reflect on the place in Franciscan spirituality of S. Clare and her sisters through the ages. It was good to hear a hymn of praise sung by a German party in the little cloister. And finally to Santa Chiara, the home of the San Damiano crucifix with its continuing message to build up the Church — to challenge, criticize, love and support. On my previous visit I was disturbed by the group of nuns noisily describing the belongings of Holy Mother Clare and urging us in six different languages to view her miraculously preserved body in the crypt. This is no longer the practice (at least it wasn't happening when I popped in) and so a quiet atmosphere is better maintained — a great improvement.

It was over all too quickly and I wanted to stay, stay. I think I must have been glowing on the return to Rome — a glow heightened by the knowledge that other members of our ecumenical group had been happy for me in my joy.

I was once present when a Third Order member showed slides of Assisi. As he went along, he could hardly speak for tears. Now I know exactly what he was re-living, re-experiencing and feeling.

ministry here to help to provide that supporting and caring environment that they need in order to develop and to find wholeness and healing so that they will be able to take their place in the outside world when they leave us.

Please pray for the school; for the governors, the staff and the boys and particularly for the new headmaster Paul Barry and his wife Sheila. If you would like further prayer information please write to the Guardian at the school.



bit daunting though I have found it rewarding to be able to share something of my Christian experience with the boys.

I believe that as a Religious Community living within the wider school community it is an important

Christian witness for us as we live out the Gospel message of Christ's love and care for these boys by living alongside them, supporting them (and other members of staff), praying for them and with them and by just being around. It is an important part of our

COMMUNITY OF S. CLARE

The sisters are seeking music copies of English Hymnal and English Praise for the use of guests. If you have any spare copies please ring Freeland (0993-881-225).

Vatican II and Muslims

'The Church has also a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to humanity. They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, first as Abraham submitted himself to God's plan, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own.

'Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as a prophet, his Virgin Mother they also honour, and even at times devoutly invoke.

'Further they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of

the dead. For this reason they highly esteem the upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-deeds and fasting.

'Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The Sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together persevere and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values'.

Declaration Nostra Aetate on relations between the Church and non-Christian religions, chapter 3.

Muslim friendships

by John Nicholas N/SSF

There is something afoot in this country at the moment. The presence of Muslims in our society is being felt at all levels in many different places. And yet it is not as if Muslims are new to Britain.

Many have been aware of strangers in their midst, particularly those living in our inner cities, for decades now. The awareness of their strangeness has been located on colour of skin, on place of origin, on manner of dress; nor should we underestimate the place of food. Who could not have noticed the restaurants and shops, run by foreigners, which have proliferated in our towns and cities. Religion until quite recently has played a minor part in the reckoning viewed as a peripheral affair, as part and parcel of a whole welter of strange customs.

Changing awareness

But that awareness is now changing. Many are now rather bewildered to find that Muslims take their religion very seriously, in a society which increasingly distances itself from its own religious traditions and roots. Many factors have contributed to this, but central to this change is that Muslims themselves are entering a more self-consciously Islamic phase. And no-one can deny that in this mood of self-assertion, there has been a move towards aggressive thought and action which has blotted out in the minds of many the Islamic injunctions for balance, compassion and tolerance. At the heart of the push to create Islamic modes of thought, there is a rejection of Westernisation, which is all the more reinforced by the constant bombard-

ment of Western media images portraying Islam as disruptive and fanatical threatening the very fabric of Western civilisation. Muslims are becoming increasingly convinced that the West is determined to thwart their quest for identity. They see the West speaking of them as something remote, exotic and 'out there'.

Nonetheless they are not just out there. There are well over a million Muslims in this country. There are a billion Muslims in the world inhabiting 44 countries. Mutual understanding is therefore imperative. Discovering what we have in common, and a growing of mutual respect for our differences is a necessary task for the general welfare of all.

Accepting differences

The secret of any understanding is not to impose a unitary view on Muslims, but to accept them for what they are. I am wary of generalisation because I know something of the depth and breadth of Islam's cultures. I am painfully aware of living in a society where the word Muslim takes on all the menace of a racist slur. I am very conscious of how generalisation can become stereotype and stereotype lead to scapegoat. Bigotry and prejudice breed where there is ignorance, and we can no longer afford to be wilfully ignorant of our neighbours.

One way out is through the transforming and reconciling power of personal relationship. I know how I have been nourished in my own friendships with Muslims. I have been especially touched by their support for my own vocation with SSF, displaying a far more loving and less dismissive attitude than many of my non-Muslim friends. I know that some of the happiest days of my holiday this year will be spent with a Muslim family who are very dear and precious to me, and that the love of Christ will be far more apparent to me in their home than in much of my holiday travelling. I know that I am shortly to be the Godparent of a baby, Ariana, whose mother is Catholic and whose father is Muslim. It will be incumbent on me to assist in ensuring that Ariana is as aware of her Muslim inheritance, as well as that of her Catholic mother. There are many Christian texts I can think of to help her on her way, but as good a starting point as any could well be the Qu'ranic verses 'My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth' (21:105); 'The earth is God's: to such of his servants as He pleaseth doth he give it as an heritage'. (7:128).

I trust that I will continue to grow in my understanding of Islam. I pray that the whole world will come to learn all that Islam has to offer it: a balance between the affairs of the world and spirituality, its piety and care for the family, its respect for holiness and righteousness in the sight of God. It must also be clearly understood that dialogue and interaction with Islam can only be possible when its core features are understood with sympathy and its inherent value and dignity, its otherness are recognised. We who call ourselves Christians still have a long way to go.

Brother Frederick SSF

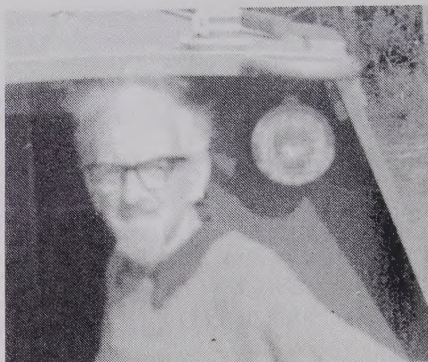
Brother Victor writes:

Brother Frederick (Frederick Nuttall-Smith) who died on 26 June, 1990 aged 84 was one of the Society's hidden treasures. He joined SSF in 1946 having lived an eventful life in the colonial service, partly in East Africa, but unless you were familiar with the Friary in Plaistow, Brother Fred would probably have been just a name on the intercession list.

A story that Freddy used to delight in retelling was that he first arrived at Hilfield with an appointment to speak with Father Algy but with no intention of joining. In legendary style Father Algy had gone away so Fred stayed on for a week in order to speak with him. By this time the brothers assumed he was an aspirant, and so apparently did Father Algy, who on summoning Fred informed him that he was to be made a postulant the next day. A case of election rather than calling!

Brother Patrick and he were made novices together, and Patrick remembers chopping wood with Fred one day and asking him what he thought he might be doing in the Society. Fred replied, 'I just want to do whatever I'm asked to do', and really he lived by that maxim. Most of his early years in community were spent at the newly refounded Glasshampton, where he appears to have established a reputation for austerity in the kitchen. In 1956 Algy asked him to go to Plaistow to do the cooking for three weeks. When I first went there in '73 Fred was still doing some cooking, if only Sunday lunch, and austerity still seemed to be the order of the day.

Through all those years of living and working in Plaistow it would be easy to romanticise Fred into a humble friar



patiently working away in the background in the style of the Brother Lawrence story. There was however a peppery side to him that could often give way to outbursts of anger, and it was obvious that a fiery, restless and passionate heart beat strongly in his breast.

This could have led to a rather difficult old age of frustration, but in the event Freddy grew old most gracefully. The pepperiness and fire grew into a certain generous wisdom combined with an unfailing concern for any he thought were being abused by power. His passionate heart mellowed into abiding and loyal friendships, and his friendship with the late Miss Lilian Lewis of the Third Order was a powerful model of an intimate, celibate relationship.

In his old age Freddy also faced and found answers to some deep spiritual and emotional questions that came with him into community. Those of us who shared in this facing and finding regard it as a privilege, and I am happy to attest that it has enriched my own life.

Hidden and low-key as in many ways his community life was, Brother Fred is nevertheless a light of inspiration and hope that will burn steadily for me and for all those who shared his growing old gracefully.

The Surplice

To think so many battles have been fought over this four and a half yard circumference of white linen. Not just by those who ironed it up to the difficult tucks beneath the yoke but by Divines wrangling over rubrics.

For me it is my only finery, by law decent and comely; a vestry friend put on often in dread; given away to deft old fingers to mend.

I have seen them hanging in as many ways as there have been voices chanting in them: immaculate in hanging wardrobes; or worn with the peg mark still obtruding; or chucked on the back seat of the car with the purple stole and the shopping.

We have put these garments on for centuries.

They persist. We wither and crease inside them.

David Scott

Understanding people

by David Stephen SSF

Understanding people is vital. The better people understand one another in families, at work and in their leisure, the more fruitful and enjoyable will be their lives. I have been enabled to understand better others and myself through the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

This fascinating story began about the time of World War I, when Katherine Briggs became intrigued by the fact that people are different. Her research enabled her to show that people have distinctly different personality types. In 1923, she was excited by reading Carl Jung's *Psychological Types* and continued her work. At the beginning of World War II, Katherine's daughter Isabella, and her husband Clarence Myers, wanted to do something 'that might help people to understand each other and avoid destructive conflict'. Isabella decided to continue her mother's work and find some way of making these theories of practical use, hence the MBTI. Over the years, a mass of data was collected and research done and in 1975, the MBTI was made available for use by qualified people. It is now being used from Alnmouth to Australia.

Isabella wrote: 'The Type concepts shed light on the way people see and judge on the things they value most. The Type concepts are thus useful whenever one person must communicate with another, or live with another, or make decisions that affect another's life'. I find they are shedding light a lot of the time.

To discover, benefit from and make use of the Type concepts, you need to take part in an MBTI Workshop. You cannot fail or pass, or do badly or well, because the MBTI is not a test but an indicator and helps in understanding one's natural preferences. Since 1986, we have put on one Myers-Briggs Workshop a year at Alnmouth, entitled 'Me, You and God'. They have all been overbooked. Now the demand is such that we plan to put on three workshops in 1991; they will begin on a Friday evening and end by teatime on Sunday. Book early!

Stop press: the dates for workshops in 1991 are: 8-10 March, 3-5 May, 13-15 September.

Community Routes

►► New headmaster

Paul Barry BA, Dip.Ed. has been appointed headmaster of Hooke School. He has wide experience in both day and residential special schools and particular interests in drama, outdoor education and religious education. His initial teacher training was at Culham College where he studied Divinity. Later studies gained him a BA with the Open University and a secondment to Leicester University for the Diploma in Educational Studies. He has been a President of the National Council for special Education and is currently a committee member of the Wessex Region's Association of Workers for Maladjusted Children, having been its first chairman from 1985 to 1988. He is 45 years old and is married with 3 children.

►► Belfast sisters

'Recently I have guided a couple of individual quiet days in the house, preached at the University Chaplaincy Church and been involved in planning the programme for the ecumenical Religious Together', writes sister Phyllis. 'Future engagements are guiding the retreat of a postulant member of the Third Order, conducting a quiet day at the Columbanus Community of Reconciliation, and giving a Franciscan response to a talk by a local Jesuit as part of the Jesuit Centenary year'.

'Looking back over the past year', writes sister Joy, 'I know Belfast to be a place that deeply challenges me, both through my cross-community work encounters with individuals and small groups through Shalom House, an ecumenically run open house on the peace lines five minutes walk from our house, and also in the meeting with "Oasis", a group that reaches out to those people who feel misunderstood and unheard by the mainstream of society'.

►► Belfast brothers

For almost two years now there have been only four brothers in the Belfast Friary. David Jardine is the only Irishman in the group. He is Guardian of the house and his main work is the Church's Ministry of Healing. Hubert has served fourteen years in Belfast and, although now 71 years of age, still works hard in the Church of the Holy Redeemer, and on Saturday evenings runs a meditation group. Vincent came to Belfast from two years in New



Brothers and sisters who met recently in Birmingham to discuss the presence of SSF in Africa. (L-R, back) James Anthony, Amos, Hugh, Gillian Mary (CSP), Roger Alexander, Veronica. (Front) Damian, Julian Michael. (James Anthony writes about Tanzania on page 12.)

Zealand. He has done a great job in the garden, assists Hubert in the parish, and is involved in a number of ecumenical activities. Paul is the latest arrival and has found his ministry with the Mission to Seamen and in the Young Offenders Centre.

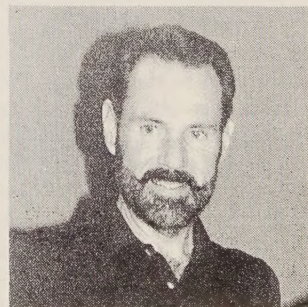
During the last 15 months the brothers have spearheaded a project to encourage people to pray five minutes a day for Northern Ireland. 30,000 people have received prayer cards. From the start of the project in April, 1989, until the beginning of April, 1990, fifty-one people were killed. This was the lowest number of deaths in any twelve month period since 1970. We shall be developing the project in months to come and are also spearheading a project to turn S. Anne's Cathedral into a real place of prayer for Northern Ireland. We believe that if our problems are going to be solved we need a lot of help from above, but we also believe that if enough people pray enough the situation in our province can be healed a lot more quickly than most people realise.



Sister Angela Helen with Brother Michael at her taking of life vows

►► New Provincial

At the Pentecost Chapter of the American Province Brother Dominic was elected Provincial Minister, a role he has been fulfilling for the past year in an 'acting' capacity. Many people will remember Dominic with affection from his two years in England during his period in First Profession. During his time with SSF he has done considerable work in a multi-racial area of New York City: also at Little Portion whilst studying at Stonybrook University and the Seminary. He was one of the pioneer brothers of the work in Trinidad, from whence he moved to San Francisco where his nursing qualifications gained him a post in the trauma unit of one of the city's leading hospitals. He has been, and will continue to be the Guardian at San Damiano Friary there.



►► Phone call

Please note that the telephone number of Hilfield Friary changed on 12 July. The new number is 0300 341345.

►► Cambridge study day

On Saturday, 6 October at Homerton College in Cambridge, Brother Michael and Sister Elizabeth are joining up with the Reverend Barrie Williams to lead a study day on Franciscanism in the twentieth century. The name of S. Francis appears in books about the environment, in literature on Christian unity, and is heard at rallies calling for justice and peace. They will be helping participants to review the revival of Franciscan spirituality and the help it gives in a world of increasing environmental degradation. The cost of the day school is £8.00. Information and application forms are available from the University of Cambridge Board of Extra-mural Studies, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge CB3 8AQ, telephone 0954 210636.

►► Justice and peace

The ecumenical Justice and Peace Links Conference for religious took place at the end of April using the form of a Base Christian Communities workshop. 'In looking at the British situation', says sister Pat, 'we recognised that it is not possible to transfer experience directly, but that there is much to be learnt from the third world method. Not all are called to live in base communities, but Christian community, however it is expressed, is the basis for living out and working towards the kingdom. As we looked at our own situations we recognised that there is always something, however small, that can be done towards making vision into reality, and that it is often the first step that is the most important. One remark, a statement of what it might mean to be church, particularly impressed me: "To turn around and know the names of people who are nobodies in our society" '.

►► Frozen north

'The Friary, Alnmouth, good morning. Frozen North? Hold on, I'll put you through to the kitchen'. What a far cry from our old, crackling tannoy intercom which produced such strange sounds and never seemed to be answered, even if by chance we had got through to the right floor. Things are slowly improving: we hope to have a wash basin in each guest room by the end of the financial year and they all have decent beds now.

At a recent morning meeting for brothers, we heard a letter read which thanked the Lord for 'being with a group of praying brothers who were so full of joy'. There was a pause which was broken by 'I wonder where they



Brother Paschal with Bishop David Sheppard at his ordination

spent the weekend!'

So let us praise the Lord that in spite of, or perhaps because of our budget, the guest accommodation is being improved; and in spite of, or perhaps because of, our efforts to be Franciscan brothers, we are being used to answer our own prayer, prayed so often by Christians everywhere, every day: Thy Kingdom come.

►► Compline taped

Brother Reginald's arrangements of Night Prayer have been recorded on cassette by singers from the Jesus College Choir, Cambridge. 'These simple settings', says brother Reginald, 'are based on traditional plainsong and are designed for use by groups with limited resources, with or without accompaniment'. The recording is released by McCrimmon Publishing in Cambridge and costs £5.18.

►► Glasshampton news

Our life of prayer and study and of hospitality to our guests has continued unchanged, allowing for the silence and solitude which are such rare commodities in today's busy world, and yet are so nourishing for the life of the spirit.

Amos the new guardian, Raymond Christian and Mark Nicholas are all in their first year, and Ramon left in August to live the hermit life. Many will miss Ramon and we are all so grateful for what he has done while at Glasshampton. May God bless his new life in his little bargain caravan in Wales, and may his latest book, a novel about Jacopone da Todi, be a best seller.

►► Round-up

Elizabeth and Hilary have moved to Newcastle-under-Lyme... Caroline has gone south to Plaistow... Judith has moved to Stepney... Susan is now in Birmingham... Angela Helen made her life profession at Compton on 1 May... Pat took her simple vows at Newcastle-under-Lyme on 25 March... Paschal was ordained deacon on 1 July and will be living in the house in Liverpool whilst ministering at S. Columba, Anfield... Jonathan is now at Hilfield... Chris Hillman (formerly Thomas) took his simple vows on 21 July shortly after moving to Stepney... William Henry and Alan Michael have exchanged places in Edinburgh and Glasgow... the novices dispersed from Glasshampton, Douglas John (formerly Mark Douglas) and Julian Michael to Liverpool, Dunstan Thomas to Plaistow, Alan John and John Nicholas to Hilfield... David Francis and Gerard Paul left Liverpool for Glasshampton where Robert, David Charles and Michael Clare have joined them... Joshua Andrew is now in Plaistow... Robbie Asaph goes to Hooke... John, Andrew Kevin and Christopher Francis are now in Liverpool... and Hilfield welcomed 6 new postulants on 7 September... In New Zealand, Jean Malcolm was admitted as a novice at Auckland on 27 May, taking the name Jean Te Puna... In the Pacific Islands Province John Michael and Ashwin Siapu have made their professions of vows.

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Reviews

Thomas Merton, (ed. William H. Shannon), **The Hidden Ground of Love**, Collins Flame, £14.95.

Thomas Merton, (ed. Robert E. Daggy), **The Road to Joy**, Collins Flame, £12.95.

Thomas Merton wrote thousands of letters. At the Thomas Merton Studies Centre at Bellarmine College, Kentucky, there are some 3,500 of them, to over a thousand correspondents, and more are turning up all the time.

He wrote to popes, bishops, priests, religious and lay people; to monks, rabbis, Zen masters; to Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, Orthodox, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and Sufis; to theologians, poets, writers, psychiatrists, sociologists, politicians, prisoners and pop stars. The contents of his letters cover almost all aspects of human endeavour. They are filled with compassion, humour, irony, prophetic insight, devotional fervour, political challenge and theological awareness. They concern the mystery and love of God and debate all the main issues that confront our contemporary human situation.

Specifically the first volume, **The Hidden Ground of Love**, contains letters on religious experience and social concerns. Many of these letters reveal a serious literary endeavour, and are in fact brief and powerful essays on the topics they treat. The care Merton took to preserve many of them suggests he had a premonition of their importance.

The second volume, **The Road to Joy**, contains letters to old and new friends and, like the first volume, there is a potted memo on each correspondent. It is a sheer delight to trace Merton's evolving pilgrimage through these letters from the first hesitant paragraphs to Mark Van Doren, his teacher at Columbia University in 1959, to the host of friends concerning their joys and sorrows during 1968 — the year of his death.

These are not books to read from cover to cover, but to dip into (though it is difficult to put them down). They are books to be obtained by a Tertiary or Companions group to be available for constant reference.

There may be many scores of letters which will not be of immediate interest to a particular reader, but for everyone there will be many hundreds which will challenge, inform, vitalize and stimulate springs of energy, creativity and humour — mixed liberally with the love of God.

If they are not soon in the library of each SSF house I shall want to know the reason why!

RAMON SSF

Grace Jantzen, **Julian of Norwich**, SPCK, £8.95.

This is a book I have been eager to review for a long time; it is a resounding success. Books about Julian of Norwich have over the years increased from a trickle to a torrent, what is it that makes this one special?

Grace Jantzen takes very seriously the fact that not only was Julian a mystic but that she was also a formidable theologian. Where Julian received her education is a question that is brought up in part one of the book which speculates about her life, of which very little is known. Jantzen paints a vivid picture of life as it might have been for the fourteenth century anchoress. We are reminded of the Black Death, the corruption of the Church, and the trade in cloth as well as religious ideas that took place in Norwich.

Having placed Julian in her rightful context we are treated to an analysis of her writings, as Jantzen carefully weaves together theological, philosophical and psychological language. The famous meditation from *Revelations of Divine Love* concerning a hazelnut inspires a beautifully balanced chapter on creation and asceticism in Julian. Creation-centred spirituality has recently acclaimed Julian as an important source for their positive view of creation and of human nature, and rightly so. What Jantzen does though is to suggest that *Revelations of Divine Love* can be seen as a prolonged meditation on the problem of evil and its remedy.

Julian is of course repeatedly reminded that 'all will be well and all manner of things will be well': how then is the existence of so much sin and suffering to be explained? Although Julian is told that this is a mystery she persistently seeks a deeper knowledge. In this great struggle for understanding, Jantzen is an excellent guide who draws the reader into that mystery.

This is not an easy book to read but it is one that deserves to be read carefully and thoroughly. It is important because it represents a welcome reunion of spirituality and theology, bridging the gap between a purely subjective spirituality and a heartless theology.

CHRIS HILLMAN SSF

David Scott, **Playing for England**, Bloodaxe Books, £5.95.

David Scott is a vicar in Cumbria and is a member of the Third Order. In 1986 he was awarded the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize for his first book of poetry.

As the title suggests these poems are very English; that is to say they exhibit that peculiarly English mixture of amusement, affection and a tinge of regret. The subject matter is ostensibly

the details of English life, but the details are not the real concern; they are his way of

... working out God's pattern from this piece of it...

The pieces, the details he selects may be pulling up weeds, a walk on a Dorset beach, a footballer or an elderly parishioner. Through the careful handling of syntax, sound and rhythm the details are precisely evoked, as in these lines from 'Locking the Church', in which you can feel the key in your hands:

It takes two hands to turn the key
of the church door, and on its
stiffest days
needs a piece of iron to work it like
a capstan.

Through these details he is gently probing, 'the questions gnaw'. He muses on an elderly parishioner looking at Skiddaw as she has watched it from childhood, still unsatisfied:

perhaps it is enough for one life,
one mountain.

Each poem has a distinctive, delicately constructed atmosphere; sometimes through a small physical detail 'The lichen / bruises the stone walls', sometimes the canvas is broader:

Tonight the sky is wide open
and locking the church is a walk
between the yews and a field of
stars.

His use of rhymes and half-rhymes is a discreet part of the musical pattern. There is only one fully rhymed poem, a light verse on 'The Closure of the Cold Research Institute'. Here too the rhythm is unobtrusively handled to add to the humour and to bring the reader up short:

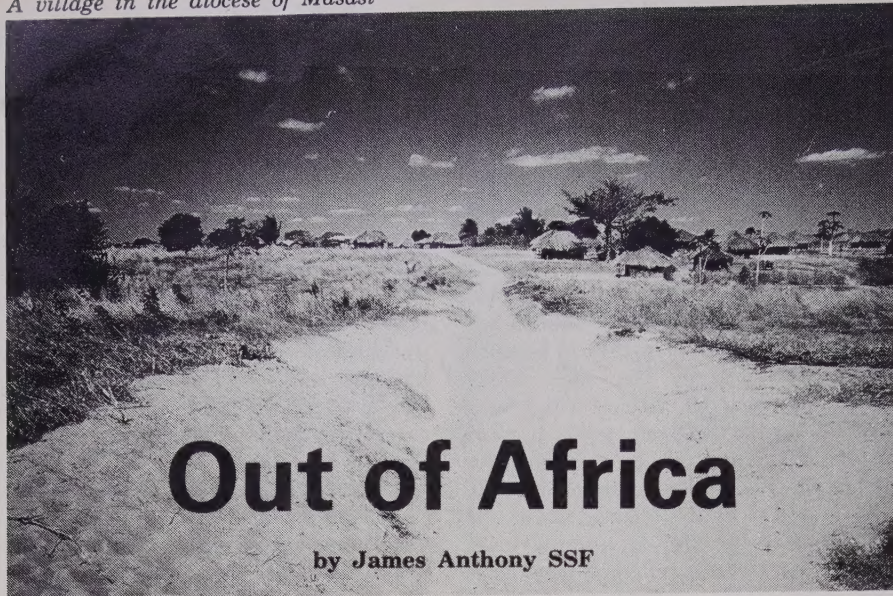
Most common things we under-
stand
sparrows, cormorants, Prayers, and
land,
but colds defy the common wit.
You get them, and that's it.

Readers may remember one of the poems in this book ('Brother Douglas Looks After the Bees') which appeared in *Franciscan* three or four years ago. It is a pleasure to print another in this issue. The book has attractive drawings by Graham Arnold.

ALAN JOHN N/SSF

London Open House Saturday, 6 October

Holy Trinity House, Orsett Tee.,
W2 (723-9735)
Plaiastow Friary, 42 Balaam St.,
E13 (476-5189)
will be holding Open House from
12—4, both beginning with the
Eucharist at noon. Please bring
sandwiches (Plaiastow) or food to
share (Holy Trinity House). Ring
for more details.



Out of Africa

by James Anthony SSF

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world. 70% of its income is in the form of aid, mostly from Scandinavia. 30% of its budget goes towards paying the interest on its debts. In 1982 the minimum wage was £1.50 a day. Now it is 30p a day. The country has little mineral wealth, poor soil and uncertain rainfall.

Masasi area has always been isolated and has never had any industry. Its one cash crop, the cashew nut, was affected by a blight in the early eighties and has not yet recovered. This year the worst floods in living memory hit the area, killing 150 people, making more than 20,000 homeless and sweeping away crops.

Western donors are becoming very wary of flamboyant projects, bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption. Britain has withdrawn almost entirely from Masasi where it once had a large integrated aid project. Much government aid, it must be admitted, was inappropriate and often more geared to the politics and economy of the donor nation than to the recipient, yet even small-scale aid has so often just not worked. Masasi district is littered with water-towers, all bone-dry because pumps no longer work, and maize mills that have been abandoned because of the cost of spare parts and diesel.

The picture seems to be one of unrelieved gloom and yet there are tiny pointers to show a way forward. One such is the palm cross industry in Masasi. This is a thriving business on a small scale, exporting palm crosses made by local people to a central depot in London from where they are distributed worldwide. A product manufactured in Masasi is exported to places where it is in demand. Simple but effective, and the very poorest peasants gain an additional income by doing dry season work.

Perhaps SSF, through its small shops at the various friaries, could also sell local products such as wood carvings, woven bowls and baskets, or even small furniture. We hope to try.

One problem for subsistence peasants is having enough seed for the next year's sowing season. So much can go wrong. The seed carefully saved from the harvest can be eaten by rats,



Masasi cathedral

termites and borers of every description. The whole standing crop can be finished off in a day by baboons, or in a night by thieves. The planting season comes round, your foodstock is depleted in any case by that time and you have no money to buy sufficient seed. Often people only plant half of the area they could easily cultivate because of lack of seed.

A pilot scheme has been planned whereby the local villagers can obtain small loans at the planting season for buying seed and then repay these loans after the harvest when they can sell some of their produce. We are starting with a grant of £100 from Franciscan Aid, and will just see how it works. Not very Franciscan running a bank? Well, perhaps not, but a lot depends on the

bank.

One of the drawbacks to development in Tanzania is that it is so often initiated and fuelled by experts from outside. They come in, show people what to do and then leave. This has been the pattern all along, starting with the notorious groundnut scheme. Perhaps the contribution of the brothers in Masasi is to be what they are — local non-experts. They are all Masasi peasants. If they try anything, then other peasants might give it a go. Nobody would ever be able to afford a tractor but some might attempt ploughing with oxen if the brothers' plough works. If their oxcart really does the job other local people might just chance going in for one. The brothers can afford experiment and change because they do have some financial help from donors. But farmers can get government loans, and if over several years they can see something working they will be emboldened to take out loans and make that gamble.

It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. These tiny flickering lights won't do much to disperse the gloom. Perhaps some will go out as soon as they are lit. But perhaps too some may be the source for new light and new hope.

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